



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: January 16, 2018  
To: Chief School Administrators  
Route To: District School Business Administrators  
From: Michael Mindlin, Director  
Fiscal Policy and Planning  
Office of School Facilities and Finance

## **Initial Release of 2018-2019 Budget Software Application**

The initial release of the 2018-2019 Budget Software Application will be accessible to authorized school district personnel on or about January 17, 2018, through the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE's) [Homeroom webpage](#). The budget software in the Homeroom website is named "2018-2019 Budget Statement Software." This release will include the revenue screen, appropriations screen, recapitulation of balances screen, enrollments screen, most of the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) calculations and supporting documentation items.

### **Key Steps/Actions**

The 2018 school election and budget procedures calendar for 2018-2019 is available through the NJDOE's School Finance webpage at [Election Calendar](#). The election calendar includes dates and deadlines relevant to school budget preparation, as well as the four special elections dates in January, March, September and December.

### **Accessing the Budget Software Application**

Access to the 2018-2019 Budget Software Application is restricted to those school district employees or vendors for whom the school district's Homeroom administrator has created a user account granting access to the school district's budget. First-time users authorized by the school district must work through the school district's Homeroom administrator to create a unique User ID and password. Instructions for establishing a Homeroom administrator and for establishing authorized users are documented in the "Homeroom Administrator Manual" available through the Homeroom webpage. Important message to Homeroom administrators: Once you have entered into the Homeroom Administration system, the 2018-2019 budget software is named "Budget Statement."

### **Guidance Documents**

The NJDOE has prepared formal guidance for completing the 2018-2019 budget software. The [2018-2019 Budget Guidelines and Electronic Data Collection Manual](#) and related appendices will be accessible through the NJDOE's [School Finance webpage](#) on or about January 17, 2018. Authorized users of the Budget Software Application are encouraged to review the manual prior to preparing the school district's budget statement.

Significant revisions and enhancements to the 2018-2019 version of the school district budget software are highlighted in the executive summary section of the [2018-2019 Budget Guidelines and Electronic Data Collection Manual](#) and are elaborated upon throughout that document.

The significant changes currently include:

- Health care cost adjustment SHBP increase of 13.0 percent (therefore, the maximum adjustment is the increase in health care costs that exceeds 2 percent but not greater than 13.0 percent, or a maximum of 11.0 percent).

A message on the “Home” tab of the “2018-2019 Budget Statement Software” will indicate when an update to the software has been made subsequent to the software’s initial release. As in prior years, updates may include, but are not limited to the release of software edits and notification of the availability of the following sections of the application: the “advertised budget” file selector; the “prepare user-friendly budget document” selector; the “minimum tax levy report” selector; the report of “district status above or below the expected local levy” selector; the “printable PDF” file selector; and the “county review and approval” page. The NJDOE will also update the software to load state aid upon release of the 2018-2019 state aid numbers. Please note the NJDOE’s updates will not overwrite the district’s previously entered data.

### **Budget Planning**

For purposes of developing your district’s preliminary budget, districts should make allowances for the possibility of changes in state aid from 2017-2018 amounts. This recommendation is for planning purposes only, and is no indication of the final state aid allocation for 2018-2019. In accordance with *N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-5*, state aid numbers will be provided to school districts within two days after the Governor’s budget message, and represent the anticipated amount of aid payable to the district.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) applicable for the 2018-2019 budget year is 1.51 percent. The applicable regional administrative cost limits for 2018-2019 for the north, central and south are \$2,246, \$2,091, and \$2,083, respectively.

### **Contact Information**

Questions concerning the regional limit calculation should be directed to the Office of School Finance at [staid@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:staid@doe.state.nj.us). Budget related questions should be directed to the Office of School Facilities and Finance at [budget@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:budget@doe.state.nj.us).

- c: Members, State Board of Education  
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